

NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW AND COMMENT SHEET

Nomination Number: 5

Name of Property: Thunderbird Lodge

Location: Rose Valley Boro., Delaware Co.

Level of Significance: National

- Meets Criteria: A. reflects historical event or theme
B. associated with prominent person X
C. architecturally important X
D. contains archaeological potential

BHP Evaluation: Thunderbird Lodge is a nationally significant example of William Lightfoot Price's work in the Arts and Crafts style. Price was a prominent advocate of the movement, not only writing about the philosophy of the movement, but designing buildings which carried out these concepts as well.

The property is additionally significant as the home of Alice Barber Stephens, a popular illustrator for Scribner's and Harper's magazines, who along with husband Charles Stephens, had the property's design commissioned. Subsequent owners, Allen and Mildred Olmsted, were nationally prominent social reformers. Mildred Olmsted, in particular, was prominent in the women's rights movement, the NAACP, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Previous Determinations, Site Visits, Etc.: The Historic Resource Survey Form was approved by the Bureau for Historic Preservation staff on August 24, 1983. The nomination was returned for revisions on January 28, 1988.

Historic Preservation Board National Register Review Comments:

Board Member's Name: _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Thunderbird Lodge
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 45 Rose Valley Road N/A not for publication
city, town Rose Valley Borough N/A vicinity
state Pennsylvania code PA county Delaware code 045 zip code 19086

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
RECREATION & CULTURE/monument

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple dwelling
RECREATION & CULTURE/monument

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls stone

stucco

roof ceramic tile

other wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Thunderbird Lodge lies on a gentle slope just west of Rose Valley Road (laid out in 1830), overlooking a branch of Vernon Run to the south. One of the principal buildings in the early 20th century intentional Arts and Crafts community of Rose Valley, its current setting is residential, featuring large lots with architect-designed homes. Originally a late eighteenth century fieldstone banked barn, this building was incorporated in 1904 into an artists' residence with studios by architect William Lightfoot Price. The 120' by 40' house has an asymmetrical plan, is two and three storeys and is an outstanding example of Price's Craftsman vernacular utilizing quarried gneiss and flint, stucco over frame, and ceramic tile. A pergola stretches south from the east section of the house through a carefully planned landscape to a two storey stucco over stone banked eighteenth century fieldstone springhouse (remodeled in 1904 as a studio). Also on the property are a one storey, 3 bay stable/garage built in 1904 and, just southeast of the house, a 1926 concrete monument with bronze plaque, beaver and bas relief marking the Great Minquas Trail. The entire Thunderbird Lodge complex retains with complete integrity Price's design, materials and landscaping.

The main facade faces south, being banked to the south and west, and consists of three clearly differentiated sections. The east section, the former barn, is 2½ storeys (banked), 3 bays and single pile. A stone porch is supported by 3 buttressed Gothic arches and has a stone balustrade with tapered stone columns atop which is an open balcony with cement parapet with 10-light French doors and partial arbor of wood. The first 1½ storeys are coursed fieldstone with quoins, while the top storey is half-timbered stucco over frame. The central section is 2 storeys, 5 bays, double pile and set back (inset) from the east section. The second storey, of stucco over frame, overhangs the stone first floor and has random fenestration of casement windows with plain green-painted cypress frame. (The random pattern and surround material are continued on the west and north elevations.) Inset at the south-west corner of this center section is a frame and stone main entrance porch roofed by the upper storey overhang on plain cypress brackets. The main door is a 5-bevel panel cypress door. The third section (dining and service wing) is set at a 45° angle to the rest of the structure and is 2½ storeys (banked), 5 bays, single pile with the lower ½ storey of stone and the upper portions of stucco over frame.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Thunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley
Borough, Delaware County
Pennsylvania

A large, partially exterior stone chimney divides the dining room and kitchen bays. The eastern (dining) bay has an oriel window with double-hung 2-light sashes on the first floor and a 4-section 8-light casement window above. The western (kitchen) bay has paired casements of 4 lights each. All roofs are of Red ceramic Mercer tile with open eaves with exposed rafter ends.

The northwestern and northern elevations exhibit the same Craftsman chalet-like eclecticism. The 2 storey, 5 bay, northwestern elevation has a 5-bevel panel cypress door set under a shed hood. The northern facade, is 2½ storeys with a gable dormer in the 5 bay central section and a small 2nd floor balcony with partial shed roof over 10-light French doors. Projecting from the NE corner of the central section is a 3 storey octagonal stair tower with flat roof and random 6-light casement fenestration. Early in the 1930's, the driveway was shifted from south to north of the house and the stair tower became the main entrance. The eastern section (former barn) has floor to ceiling 4-panel 12-light French windows on each floor, a shed roof over the first floor and a small pediment above the second floor.

The eastern elevation faces Rose Valley Road, a 19th century mill access road. Two storeys and single bay, this all stone elevation has an oriel window on the first floor and a Gothic 4-lancet window set under a large Gothic arch on the second. This upper window is flanked by a date-stone (1904) on the south and a stucco circular inset with the Thunderbird motif executed in Mercer tile on the north. The Thunderbird emblem has given the building its name.

The interior reflects Price's concept of open vistas and is best explained by the accompanying floor plan. The principal rooms all face south, while the studios have ample light from large windows on the north, east and south. There are six fireplaces, all with Mercer pictorial tile surrounds. The interior walls are plastered in a flat finish, and stained and waxed cypress is used throughout for trim, surrounds and panelling. The first floor studio (Alice Barber Stephens') has a large fireplace with heavy wood lintel inset under a Roman arch outlined in stone, built-in cupboards and window seats, and has kept exposed the barn's main chestnut beam and joists. The porch on the south served as a sleeping porch. The second floor studio (Charles H. Stephens') has a large stone fireplace in the shape of the Thunderbird with a large black keystone for the bird's head. The barn's chestnut roof trusses remain exposed and there are cypress panelled cupboards and window seat. Both studios have excellent northern light and are used by artist residents today.

(Continued on next page)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Thunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley
Borough, Delaware County,
Pennsylvania

Section number 7 Page 2

The main residential section of the building lies beyond the octagonal stair tower, which is beautifully simple with raked solid plaster balustrades topped by plain cypress handrails and beveled columns. The stairs also give access to the tower's flat roof, which was designed so that the Stephenses' son Owen could use it as an observatory.

The living room (1st floor) has flat segmental arches for door and window surrounds and for a large niche containing the fireplace with its cypress mantel. The fireplace surround is made of "rejects" from the Mercer Tile Company with inset tiles representing the Pillars of Hercules and other classical motifs. The hearth is made of russet Mercer tile. Cypress is used for the 5-panel segmental arched doors and plain surrounds, base molding, shelf rails, window sills and surrounds, and the half-columns dividing the open vestibule from the living room.

The dining room (1st floor) is an elongated octagon with brown cypress panelled wainscoting, a dramatic coved ceiling with Japanese gold wall-paper, a bay window with seat, corner fireplace with Mercer tile surround and cypress panelled triptych overmantel and antique European light fixtures. The guest bedroom (2nd floor) has a fireplace, while the Stephenses' bedroom (2nd floor) has an entrance to a large dressing room. The bedroom with the corner fireplace (over the dining room) has zodiac tile insets symbolizing the occupant's (D. Owen Stephens') interest in astronomy. The passage (2nd floor) is lighted by twelve north windows and gives access to the north balcony which was also used for celestial observations. All interior walls are of plain plaster and all 5-panel doors, plain surrounds and flooring is of cypress.

Directly south of the main building is a 2 storey, single pile banked late 18th century springhouse with a channelled milk room below and a work room/studio above. The stucco over stone building, remodelled in 1904, has 5-panel cypress doors on either gable end, a porch on the southern elevation facing the pond and Vernon Run, and a plain Mercer tile roof. To the northwest of the kitchen elevation, off the circular drive north of the main building, there is a 1 storey, 3 bay open front stable /garage with cedar shingle roof. This outbuilding has post and beam construction. Southeast of the main building and a little east of the springhouse is a concrete and bronze monument erected in 1926 to mark the Great Minquas Trail. A bronze beaver sculpted by Albert Loessle rests on the base, while a bronze plaque with description and bas relief by Charles H. Stephens is mounted on the vertical concrete slab. The monument and site were deeded by the Stephenses to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in 1926.

(Continued on next page)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley
Borough, Delaware County,
PennsylvaniaSection number 7 Page 3

Both William Lightfoot Price and the Stephenses conceived of the grounds as an integral part of the artistic home. Without major regrading, the slope was landscaped with a combination of native plants and exotica needing minimal care (so the artists would have more time to paint). The former pasture is now covered, and somewhat overgrown, with mature trees, shrubs and perennials planted by the Stephenses and two other Rose Valley families in 1904-1906. Japanese evergreens, Japanese colored maples, ginkos, various nut trees, Japanese weeping cherry trees (the first on the East Coast), rhododendron, azaleas, wisteria, Lombardy poplars all flourish next to specimen sycamores and oaks. There are about forty small springs on the lower edge of the property, forming the streamhead under the springhouse and the ornamental stone-edged pond south of the house. A sun dial, a parterre and pergolas link the studio section's south facade with the springhouse, while stone steps link the springhouse to the pond. Flagstone walks ramble throughout the grounds. Raised flower beds still maintain Japanese iris, poppies and perennials mentioned in the 1906 and 1908 magazine articles about the house. On the northern edge of the property are the remains of an apple orchard. The Great Minquas Trail, an important Indian trade route running from the Susquehanna to the Delaware, passed over the property. The pond continues to be used by wild geese during their migrations.

Thunderbird Lodge's buildings and landscaping have retained a remarkable integrity during their eighty-plus years, partially because of having only two owners. Financial reverses caused the Stephens family to convert the two studios into studio apartments in 1921, but these conversions consist of eight-foot partitions screening kitchen and bathroom facilities. (The studios always had water and sinks.) The Stephenses lived in one studio and rented the residential quarters to the Olmsteds, who purchased the property in 1932. To provide a single main entry for both owners and renters, the house had its entrance drive relocated from the southern to the northern facade in the 1930s, necessitating changing a window in the stair tower into the present main door. At this same time, the two square stone pillars and the modest ornamental iron gate were erected where the driveway intersects Rose Valley Road.

Recently, an additional upstairs bathroom has been added by expanding a closet next to the west bedroom (over the kitchen) to accommodate Mrs. Olmsted's housekeeper. The studio apartments are rented to young artists, thus maintaining the house's original function. The notable integrity of Thunderbird Lodge reflects its well-conceived design and the respectful care with which two prominent families have occupied this property.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) N/A A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

architecture
art
social history

Period of Significance
c.1790, 1904-1938

Significant Dates
c.1790, 1904

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person

Stephens, Alice Barber (1858-1932)
(see additional names on
continuation sheet)

Architect/Builder

Price, William Lightfoot (1861-1916)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Thunderbird Lodge is architecturally notable as a major work of prominent Philadelphia architect William Lightfoot Price. While the Lodge was not Price's first residential project in Rose Valley (he had done several renovations to existing buildings since 1901), it was the first which included large scale new construction. His design for this house marks his final departure from the ornate European Medieval styles. Price's new style, fully developed first in Thunderbird Lodge, utilized the plain forms and simple building materials of rural southeastern Pennsylvania as the basis for this architectural interpretation of William Morris's intellectual Arts and Crafts standards. Price was a prominent American advocate of this cultural movement, co-founding two intentional Craftsman communities, writing extensively about the philosophy of the movement and designing buildings which carried out these concepts. According to Price himself, Thunderbird Lodge was the specific building he eulogized in three of his essays on the "ideal" Arts and Crafts house. This property is therefore architecturally significant as a watershed design in Price's work and as a recognized landmark in the Arts and Crafts movement.

In addition, Thunderbird Lodge is significant in the art world as the studio/home of two influential artists, designed especially for their work and residential needs. The concept of combining workplace, residence and rural inspiration in one property was featured in a number of major articles about Thunderbird Lodge in national architecture and popular magazines from 1904 to 1909. The artist owners, Charles Hallowell Stephens and his wife, Alice Barber Stephens, were professionals with international recognition, best known for their many cover and supporting illustrations in such popular national magazines as Harper's and Scribner's. Both Stephenses were leaders in the communal life of Rose Valley and, following its demise as an artisan center, helped to create a new role for the settlement by actively drawing other artists to the community. Finally, Thunderbird Lodge is significant in social history as the home of two notable civic leaders. Allen Seymour Olmsted and Mildred Scott Olmsted used their home as a meeting place and "think tank" for fellow

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Thunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley
Borough, Delaware County
Pennsylvania

Section number 8 Page 1

SIGNIFICANT PERSONS, continued:

Olmsted, Mildred Scott (1890-)
Olmsted, Allen Seymour II (1889-1977)
Stephens, Charles Hallowell (d. 1931)

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE, continued:

leaders in race relations, civil liberties, peace and women's rights. They also contributed heavily to the development of the borough and the region.

William Lightfoot Price (1861-1916) was best known for his connection with the Arts and Crafts movement in America. Not content to advocate those values in his designs, Price also helped establish two intentional settlements dedicated to artisan craftsmanship and communal life: Arden, DE and Rose Valley, PA (in 1901). Price began his career in 1878 under Quaker architect Addison Hutton; he continued his practice with residential, institutional and large commercial designs using the highly decorative Revival styles reminiscent of European mansions. As Price became interested in social and artistic reform movements, he began to write that architecture should reflect the values of those movements, that the artist's home should reflect simplicity and a unity of work and living space. In Thunderbird Lodge, Price got his first major commission to practice these concepts. He advocated the use of indigenous materials in elemental forms, rather than the highly carved and painted constructions he and others had been building in the revival styles at the turn of the century. Price also believed that the modest or "democratic" home with plain plaster walls, attractive but subdued woodwork, and large hearths (symbolizing the importance of the family) all reflect the true American values of his period.

The simple 18th century stone bank barn and springhouse were easily incorporated into this Craftsman philosophy. (The original farmhouse, "Rose Hedge", is across the road on a separate parcel. It was heavily renovated in 1860 and again in 1915 by Walter F. Price.) Price conceived

(Continued on next page)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley
Borough, Delaware County,
PennsylvaniaSection number 8 Page 2

of the Stephensens' house as growing from the ground, in a flow of natural materials leading from heavy to light and from simple to more stylized. Thus, Thunderbird Lodge's first floor is of coursed fieldstone, its second is of plain stucco over frame and its upper storey is of patterned stucco with half-timbering. The roof lines are a variety of dormers, pavilions, gables and parapets, all tied together by red ceramic Mercer tile. The exterior woodwork is plain and painted green to blend with the plantings. The interiors of the Lodge follow Price's belief in an open sequence of rooms, flowing into one another. One can stand at the far end of the dining room and see the living room fireplace clearly. On the second floor, the passage hall along the northern side fulfills this function and leads the eye around the 45° bend. The residential quarters do "ramble" subordinately away from the massive studios, as Price describes in his undated paper on this house (see attachment). According to George Thomas, who has written extensively on this topic, Price envisioned a style similar to but less studied than the ornamented cottages and landscapes of Andrew Jackson Downing.

Following his construction of Thunderbird Lodge, Price designed and built fourteen new residences in Rose Valley (1904-1910). These dwellings continued the Arts and Crafts concepts the architect had worked out in the creation of the Stephensens' home. Much of W. L. Price's later residential work, especially commissions in Haverford and Swarthmore, embodies the principles of this "Rose Valley style". Price spoke and wrote extensively promoting his design views idealizing and summarizing the style elements of Thunderbird Lodge especially in his "The Value and Use of Simple Materials in House Building" (House and Garden, October 1905), "A Plea for True Democracy in the Domestic Architecture of America" (The Craftsman, winter 1909), and "The House of the Democrat" (The Craftsman, fall 1911). Thus by Price's own evaluation, Thunderbird Lodge was the first major commission in his Arts and Crafts style and a building which not only embodied his architectural philosophy but also conditioned his subsequent writing and work.

The significance of Thunderbird Lodge was also recognized by others soon after its construction. Price had achieved national status in 1899, when the AIA listed his Traymore Hotel as one of America's 100 outstanding buildings. Now the Stephensens' home gained him general recognition through several national magazine articles praising in detail the Lodge's unique design. These architectural and popular magazines were all-important in setting American tastes and expectations in architecture and landscaping in the first decade of the 20th century. They thus reinforced Price's message on the Arts and Crafts movement and highlighted the significance of this particular property.

(Continued on next page)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Thunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley
Borough, Delaware County,
PennsylvaniaSection number 8 Page 3

Thunderbird Lodge also attracted notice because of the artistic couple for whom it was designed. The building derives its name from the Thunderbird motif fireplace incorporated at Charles H. Stephens' request into his private studio and as a logo on the exterior street elevation. Charles Hallowell Stephens (d. 1931) was a national authority on American Indians, especially the Sioux and other western tribes. A well-known illustrator and art teacher at the PA Academy of Fine Arts, Charles Stephens' pictorial works and research on Indians stimulated his contemporaries (1890-1930) to move accurate depictions and appreciation of Native American Culture. This property has an additional touch of his in the text and bas relief of the Minquas Trail monument, which he created and then gave to the state. His work and many artifacts he collected for his illustrations are now on view at the Smithsonian and the Heye Foundation, Museum of the American Indian, in New York City.

His wife, Alice Barber Stephens, was even more notable. At the time of commissioning this house, she was a nationally known and extremely popular illustrator for Scribner's, Harper's and similar magazines. She began her career as a wood engraver for Scribner's and that technique subsequently affected her distinctive style. Alice Barber Stephens trained under Thomas Eakins at the PA Academy of Fine Arts as well as studying and teaching at the Philadelphia School of Design (now Moore College of Art). She showed ability early, winning the Academy of Fine Arts' Mary Smith Prize in 1890 (the year she married) and going on to win the Gold Medal at the Columbian Exposition in 1893, the Bronze Medal at the Atlanta Exposition of 1895 and the Gold Medal in international illustration at the London Exposition of 1902. She was also a distinguished photographer, doing mostly portraits, and was one of the few exhibitors invited to the first annual U. S. photographic show, held at the Academy of Fine Arts in 1898. During her residency at Thunderbird Lodge (from 1904 until her death in 1932), Mrs. Stephens executed approximately two-thirds of her total body of work including many of her magazine covers and most of her children's book illustrations. While many of her individual canvases from this period are in private hands, the bulk of her oeuvre is in a permanent collection named for her in the Library of Congress. During most of her thirty years in Rose Valley, Mrs. Stephens also gave private lessons to hopeful young artists.

A relative of the Stephenses co-founded the social reform community of Arden, DE with William L. Price. Through this connection, the Stephenses were acquainted with Price and were involved in the 1901 founding of Rose Valley. In 1904 they moved into the community, living at the Guest House while Mrs. Stephens took over the art studio run by Howard F. Stratton since 1901 in the Guild Hall (now Hedgerow Theatre).

(Continued on next page)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley
Borough, Delaware County,
PennsylvaniaSection number 8 Page 4

These quarters were quickly outgrown and she and her husband also needed large studio space of their own. The barn across the street from the Hall seemed adaptable. Thus, for the bulk of their notable careers, the Stephenses used Thunderbird Lodge for their own work and for teaching. A third artist also lived in the house and used the springhouse for his workroom - their son, Daniel Owen Stephens (1893-1937). He had studied under N. C. Wyeth and at the PA Academy of Fine Arts and was commissioned as both an illustrator and an astronomer by the New York Museum of Natural History at the time of his death. He has several architectural designs to his credit through the Philadelphia firms of Elizabeth and Horace Fleisher, and Day and Klauder. Owen Stephens was the latter's representative on the University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning project.

Charles H. and Alice B. Stephens were leaders in the community of Rose Valley. They had supported the concept of a colony of Arts and Crafts when it was founded in 1901 and bought major shares in the joint stock company which financed the creation of the Rose Valley Association. This community, based on the principles of William Morris, was one of a handful created in the United States and was second in size only to East Aurora, NY. When the original stock venture failed in 1905-1906, the Stephens family helped to revive the enterprise by encouraging regional artists to move to the Rose Valley enclave. They helped create new Arts and Crafts housing for these newcomers by becoming charter stockholders in the Rose Valley Improvement Company in 1910. "Originally intended to be a community of 'earnest artists in a colony of workers,' the thrust of endeavors shifted away from communal craft production toward a more individual artistic production."¹ The leadership and national fame of both Stephenses gave the community the boost it needed to survive. The couple was involved in every aspect of the community, including planning the intentional landscape of the Valley. In their garden and in the communal areas, the Stephenses continued the themes of simplicity and attention to materials by combining the striking lines of Japanese exotica with native flora. Their influence and love of Oriental plants was and is reflected still in Rose Valley gardens.

The artistic community began to attract people with similar backgrounds and values but who were not necessarily artists themselves. Among these were a couple who met during World War I, married in 1921 and moved that year as renters into the Stephens' residence, eventually buying the property in 1932. This couple, Allen Seymour and Mildred Scott Olmsted, were to provide continued leadership for the borough in a variety of ways. A graduate of Harvard College in 1901 and Harvard Law

(Continued on next page)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Thunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley
Borough, Delaware County,
PennsylvaniaSection number 8 Page 5

School in 1912, Allen Seymour Olmsted II (1889-1977) helped with the incorporation of Rose Valley as a borough in 1923, overseeing the entire legal process. Many local activities started in the Olmsted's living room; for example, the noted School in Rose Valley was organized in their home in a 1929 series of meetings with Rose Valley parents. Turned down by the state for a municipal school district, residents wanted a school reflecting their social principles and progressive beliefs. Working in conjunction with Swarthmore College (which had a prominent educational department at that time), the Olmsteds helped to form the School in Rose Valley, a private primary and secondary school which was and still is a pioneer in progressive, experimental educational techniques.

Thunderbird Lodge became significant in yet another way during the Olmsteds' ownership. Both husband and wife were active regionally and nationally in the causes of social justice, racial equality, women's rights, social work and the international peace movement. Before serving as an engineer in World War I, Allen Olmstead lived and worked at the Henry Street Settlement House (New York City). As head of the Men's Commission for Women's Suffrage, he worked with Susan B. Anthony, Anna Howard Shaw, the Pankhursts and other prominent suffragettes. Allen Olmsted was also a close friend of Roger Baldwin and helped him found the American Civil Liberties Union in 1920. The Olmsteds met during the war; Mildred Scott Olmsted served as a YWCA relief worker first at Camp Meade, MD and then in England, France and Germany. After the war, they both worked with the American Friends Service Committee feeding starving children in France, Germany and Belgium, and that experience convinced them to work for world peace.

Mrs. Olmsted was appointed by Herbert Hoover to serve on the American Commission overseeing war recovery measures. A pioneer in social work, she was graduated from Smith in 1912, won the College Settlements Association scholarship and was graduated in 1913 from what is now the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work. She developed the Social Services Department at Bryn Mawr Hospital and served as its first director. In 1914, she began to work with Margaret Sanger and the American Birth Control League, starting the first clinic in PA. Mildred Olmsted became a suffragette in 1914 and has worked all of her life for women's rights through social work programs, the League of Women Voters and special women's programs during the Depression.

(Continued on next page)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Thunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley
Borough, Delaware County,
Pennsylvania

Section number 8 Page 6

Building on their individual and collective involvement with liberal causes, the Olmsteds used their lovely suburban home, Thunderbird Lodge, as an informal conference center for the national and international leaders with whom they worked for social reform. During the 1920s and 1930s, public meetings on racial integration, minority rights and other liberal social issues were frequently disrupted by violent attacks on known leaders. It was safer and quieter to hold informal and planning meetings in a private setting. Therefore, the Olmsteds' house became a familiar stopping place for people such as Jane Addams, James Farmer, George Washington Carver and Martin Luther King. Both Olmsteds had worked actively since 1920 with the NAACP and in promoting racial justice locally with Bayard Rustin and Leslie Pinckney Hill. Allen Olmsted gave extensive free legal services to the NAACP and to other organizations supporting minority rights.

Thunderbird Lodge has also been closely tied to Mildred Scott Olmsted's international leadership in the peace movement. Joining the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom upon her return from war-torn Europe, Mrs. Olmsted became the Philadelphia chapter secretary in 1921 while serving as director of the White Williams Foundation. In 1922, she was handpicked by Jane Addams (founder and first WILPF Director) to be her successor. Mildred Scott Olmsted became the Executive Director of the American WILPF in 1924 and is frequently referred to as the "administrative genius" of WILPF. She was one of the small staff of WILPF when it opened its international headquarters at Geneva in 1929, several weeks before the first session on the League of Nations and was an official observer at its deliberations. She has been a member of the WILPF special delegations to the Oval Office and to the United Nations. Mildred Scott Olmsted helped organize and has been U. S. delegate to international peace conferences in Prague, Grenoble, Zurich, Luhacovice, (Czechoslovakia), Luxembourg, Paris, Copenhagen, Birmingham (U. K.), Stockholm, Asilomar (U. S.), The Hague, Nyborg (Denmark), Tokyo and New Delhi.

She traveled extensively throughout the U. S. and the world speaking on peace, women's issues and social justice. The Olmsteds repaid the hospitality shown them on such trips by hosting visiting leaders in those fields at their home in Rose Valley. Allen Olmsted provided free legal counsel to the national and international WILPF.

(Continued on next page)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Thunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley
Borough, Delaware County,
PennsylvaniaSection number 8 Page 7

Thus, Thunderbird Lodge has been significant architecturally as a major design of William Lightfoot Price and as a national example for the promotion of Arts and Crafts design values. As the workplace and residence of two prominent artists during the peak of their careers, it has significant associations with the artistic and illustrative modes of the early 20th century. Thunderbird Lodge has a strong association with national and international movements for peace, social justice, racial equality and women's rights, having been from 1921 the home, office and informal conference center for Allen Seymour Olmsted's and Mildred Scott Olmsted's lifetime activities in those fields.

1. Ayres, William and Ann Barton Brown, eds. A POOR SORT OF HEAVEN, A GOOD SORT OF EARTH..., Chadds Ford, PA, Brandywine River Museum, 1983, p. 88.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Ayres, William and Ann Barton Brown, eds. A POOR SORT OF HEAVEN, A GOOD SORT OF EARTH : THE ROSE VALLEY ARTS AND CRAFTS EXPERIMENT. (Essays & catalogue for an exhibition held Jan. 22 to March 20, 1983.) Chadds Ford, PA, Brandywine River Museum, 1983.
2. Ham, Peter et al. A HISTORY OF ROSE VALLEY. Published by the Borough of Rose Valley. (Chester, PA, John Spencer Inc., 1973.)
3. THE NATIONAL CYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY, vol. 23, pp. 278-279. "Stephens, Alice Barber." Ann Arbor, Mich., University Microfilms, 196
4. Olmsted, Mildred Scott. Personal papers, photographs and oral interviews
5. Periodical articles on Thunderbird Lodge :
Arts and Decoration, March 1911, "A Studio Home in Rose Valley," by Charles de Kay, pp. 198-201.
American Homes and Gardens, March 1909, "Homes of American Artists: an artist's home in Rose Valley," by Ralph de Martin, pp. 95-98.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: preparer's files

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 1.6 acres

UTM References

A 18 466825 4416365
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Thunderbird Lodge property corresponds to Delaware County tax parcel #39-00-00159-00, and is shown on the attached map as property #38 on the Rose Valley Borough tax map #39-02. A complete description of this property is in the Delaware County Deed Book 1932, pp. 316-317, deed #939.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The above boundary includes all structures and planned landscaping historically associated with the property since its remodelling by William L. Price for the Stephenses in 1904.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy V. Webster, Senior Planner
 organization Delaware County Planning Department date May 4, 1989
 street & number 2nd and Orange Streets telephone (215) 891-5212
 city or town Media state PA zip code 19063

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley
Borough, Delaware County,
PennsylvaniaSection number 9 Page 1

5. Periodical articles on Thunderbird Lodge, continued :
Town and Country, Nov. 20, 1909, "The Home of Two Artists," pp. 17-19.
Suburban Life, vol. VI, #1 (Jan. 1908), "Alice Barber Stephens' unique suburban home," by Mabel Tuke Priestman, cover and pp. 45-46.
6. Price, William Lightfoot :
"Choosing simple materials for the house," in Charles Francis Osborne, ed., Country Homes and Gardens of Moderate Cost, Phila., J.C. Winston Inc., 1907, pp. 33-41.
"The House of the Democrat," The Craftsman, vol. 21, #2 (1911), pp. 161-164.
"Mrs. Alice Barber Stephens' Studio, Rose Valley, Pa.," undated typescript, partially reprinted in George E. Thomas's essay in Ayres' exhibition catalogue; text attached.
"A Plea for True Democracy in the Domestic Architecture of America," The Craftsman, vol. 16, #3 (1909), pp. 251-256.
"The Value and Use of Simple Materials in House Building," House and Garden, vol. 8, #3 (Oct. 1905), pp. 103-115.
7. Swarthmore College, Friends' Historical Library. Misc. material on Allen Seymour and Mildred Scott Olmsted.
8. Swarthmore College, Peace Collection. Papers of Allen Seymour and Mildred Scott Olmsted.
9. Tatman, Sandra L. & Roger W. Moss, BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF PHILADELPHIA ARCHITECTS: 1700-1930. Boston, G.K. Hall & Co., 1985. pp. 629 & 631.
10. Thomas, George Earl, "William L. Price, builder of men and buildings," Dissertation for the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, University of Pennsylvania, 1975.
11. WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA. 44th edition, 1986-87, vol. 2, p. 2106, "Olmsted, Mildred Scott." Wilmette, Ill., Marquis Who's Who, 1987.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Thunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley
Borough, Delaware County,
Pennsylvania

Price, William Lightfoot. "Mrs. Alice Barber Stephens' Studio, Rose Valley, Pa.," undated typescript in George E. Thomas's collection of Price material. Probably written by Price for Ralph de Martin's article in American Homes and Gardens, March 1909
Thomas reproduced this fragment in Ayres' catalogue, pp. 31-33 :

" This house grew, as all houses should grow, out of the needs of the owners and the opportunity offered by the site.

In this particular case the site included an old stone barn, and as part of the demand was for two studios, the whole house may be said to have grown out of these facts. The barn doors fortunately opened north, and changed to windows, gave the desired studio light; the pleasant outlook as fortunately lay to the south and included an old springhouse that had crept in between the trunks of giant sycamores and nestled in the hollow so that its roof was nearly level with the ground.

" The old barn standing near the road was converted into first and second floor studios, the old timber roof being rebuilt for the upper studio, and large windows and fireplaces being built into the old walls.

" The house rambles off from the fireplace and off the studios and is connected to them by an octagon stair hall. It is built in part of field stone so like that in the old barn that it is almost impossible to tell old work from new. The upper part is of a warm gray plaster, and the roof of red tile. All the detail is as simple and as direct as possible, and the interior is finished in cypress stained to soft browns and grays and guilty of no finish other than wax or oil.

" The dining room is paneled to the spring of a flat elliptic ceiling which is covered with Japanese gold paper, as are the walls of the living room.

" It is what was intended to be, the home and workshop of busy artists, and the grounds and garden growing up around it are of the simple and direct character that might be expected to result from the old environment and the new life growing up within it. "

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Thunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley
Borough, Delaware County,
Pennsylvania

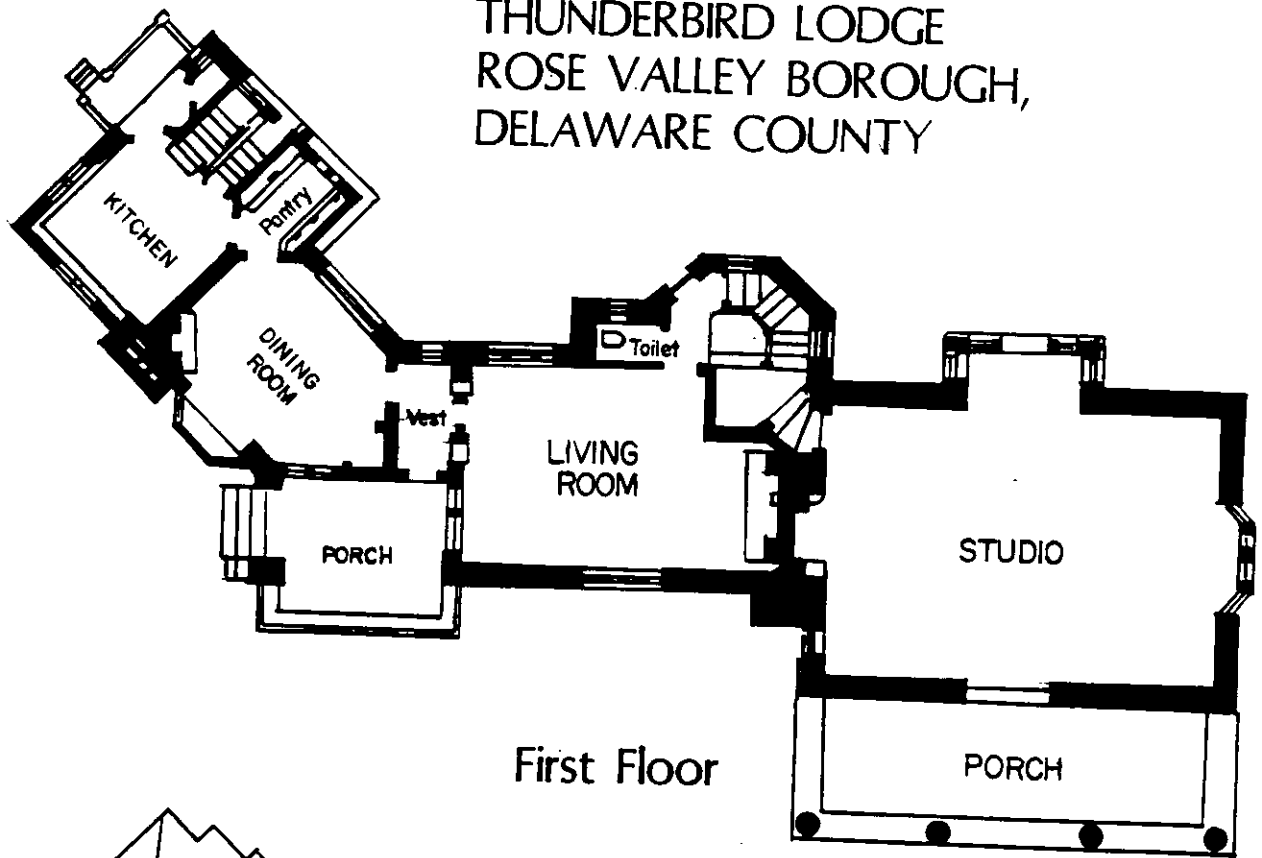
Section number 9 Page 3

Thunderbird Lodge, Rose Valley Borough, Delaware County, Pennsylvania
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION ENCLOSED:

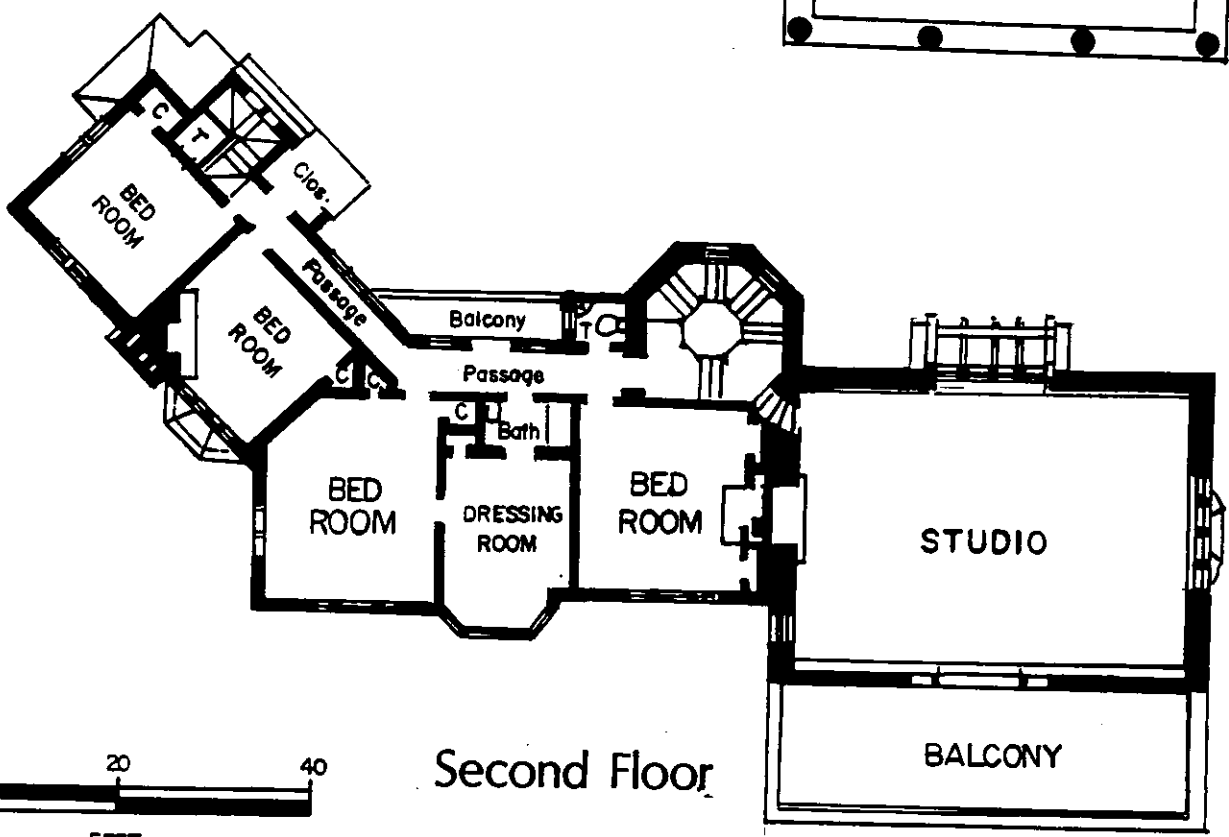
- A. 8 x 10 black and white photographs taken by Nancy V. Webster, March 1986. Verified as still accurate, May 1989.
1. Exterior, showing main (S) facade including former barn section and central (living room) section.
 2. Exterior of main (SW) facade showing the dining room/kitchen section.
 3. Exterior, showing gable (W) end and rear (N) facade of the kitchen/dining room section.
 4. Exterior, showing rear (N) facade with octagonal stair tower and the growth of plantings since construction.
 5. Exterior, showing rear (N) facade of the former barn-studio section.
 6. Exterior, showing street gable end (E) with the Thunderbird logo at upper NE eave and Gothic window and porch supports.
 7. Exterior, close-up of the Thunderbird logo in Mercer tile.
 8. Interior, octagonal dining room's W end with original panelling, Mercer tile fireplace and Japanese tea paper on ceiling.
 9. Interior, octagonal dining room showing E end with panelling and Stephenses' cupboard in niche.
 10. Interior, W end of upper (Charles H. Stephens') studio with Thunderbird-shaped fireplace and original woodwork.
 11. Interior, E end of the upper studio, showing Gothic window, barn timbers and original woodwork.
 12. Interior, ground floor of the octagonal stair tower, with entrance to lower (Alice Barber Stephens') studio.
 13. Grounds, springhouse's gable end (S) and E side, with gardens and main house in rear.
 14. Grounds, pergola and parterre facing the main (S) facade.
 15. Grounds, close-up of Great Minquas Trail monument, 1926.
- B. Present day floor plan for first and second floors of Thunderbird Lodge.
- C. Present day sketch of site plan for Thunderbird Lodge.
- D. Rose Valley Borough official tax parcel map #39-02, with Thunderbird Lodge parcel outlined in red.

(Continued on next page)

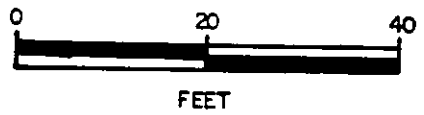
THUNDERBIRD LODGE
ROSE VALLEY BOROUGH,
DELAWARE COUNTY



First Floor



Second Floor



Thunderbird Lodge
Rose Valley Bor., Delaware Co.

Boundary - - -
Photo View >

Key

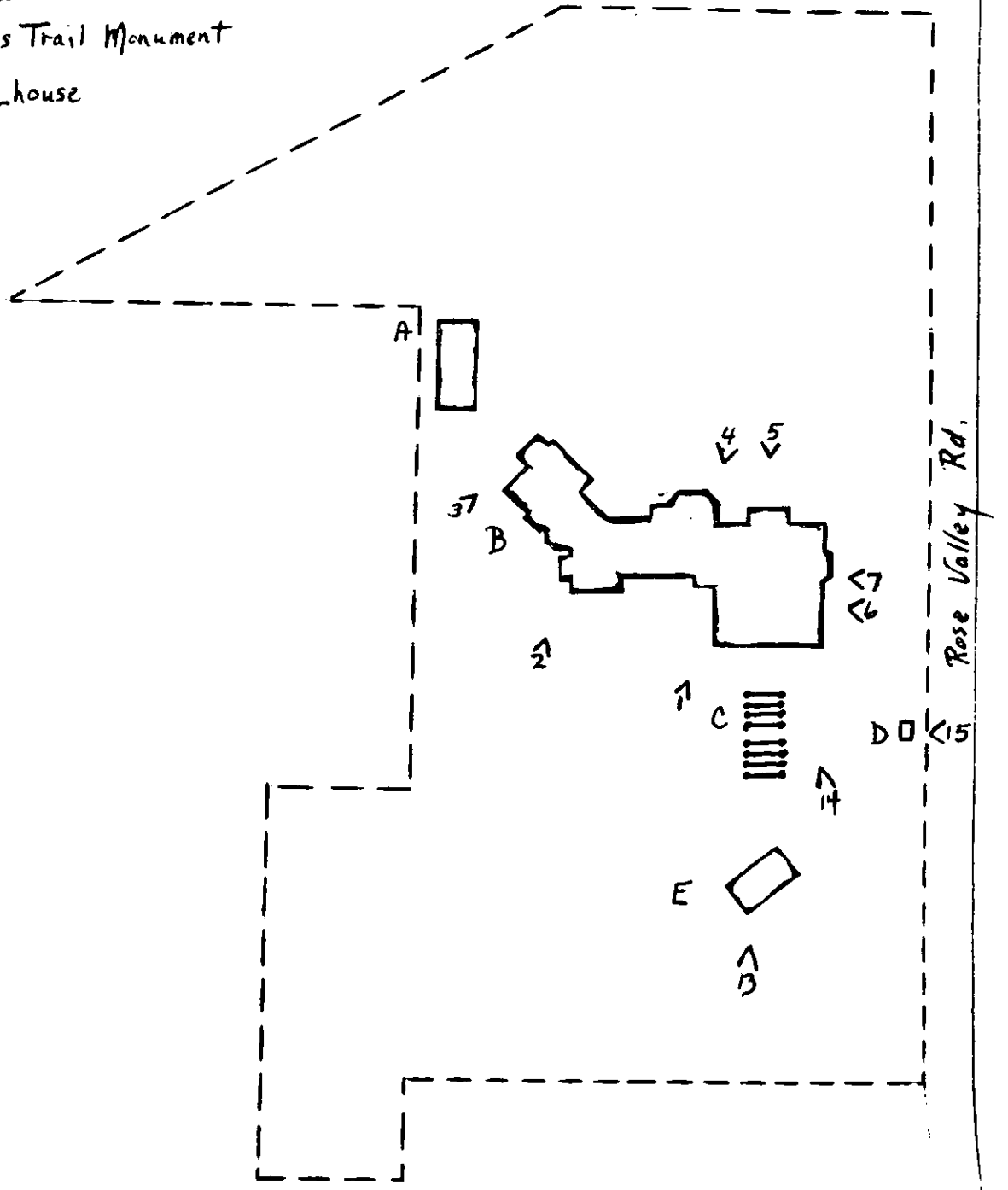
A Garage

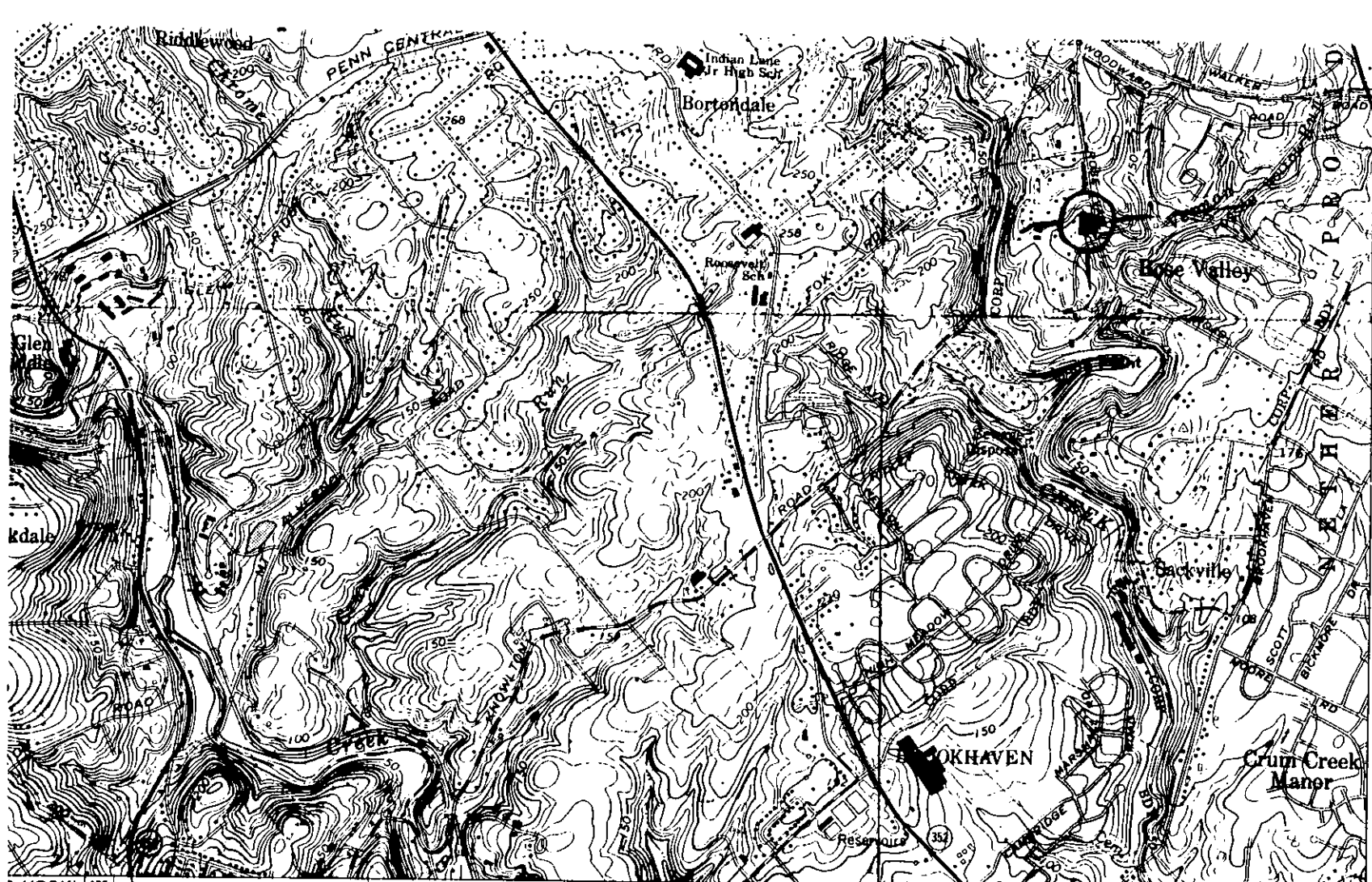
B Thunderbird Lodge

C Pergola

D Minguas Trail Monument

E Springhouse

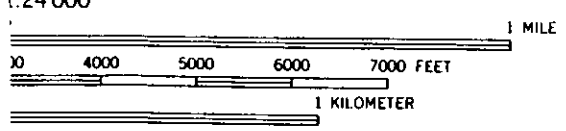




Thunderbird Lodge
 Rose Valley Barr, Delaware Co

Media Quad
 Zone 18
 E-466825
 N-4416345

MARCUS HOOK 4 MI. 25' 465 466
 39° 52' 30" 75° 22' 30"



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty		Light-duty	
Medium-duty		Unimproved dirt	
	U. S. Route		State Route



MEDIA, PA.

N3952.5—W7522.5/7.5

1966
 PRODUCTION 1973
 AMS 5963 IV NW—SERIES V831

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1973. This information not field checked
 Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
 AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST